

News

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Department
of Labor



Bureau of Labor Statistics

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SEPTEMBER 2003 CONSUMER PRICE INDEX DALLAS-FORT WORTH, TEXAS

Retail prices in the Dallas-Fort Worth metropolitan area rose 0.3 percent during August/September, after edging down 0.2 percent the previous bimonthly period, the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor reported today. Regional Commissioner Bob Gaddie stated that five of the eight major categories registered increases, but higher food and beverages prices were primarily responsible for the rise. The Regional Commissioner noted that because these short-term changes are not adjusted for seasonal variation, consumers and businesses should be cautious in drawing conclusions about long-term retail price trends.

The Dallas-Fort Worth Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) was 177.0 (1982-84=100) in September, 2.2 percent above a year ago. The index means that a typical market basket of goods and services that cost \$100.00 for Dallas-Fort Worth consumers in 1982-84, cost \$177.00 in September.

The index for food and beverages increased 1.8 percent during August/September, after declining 0.7 percent during June/July. All three categories comprising the food and beverages index registered increases. The food at home (grocery items) and food away from home (restaurant food) indexes both rose 1.8 percent and costs for alcoholic beverages increased 2.1 percent. In the grocery category, beef and veal, as well as bananas exhibited higher prices. Over the year, the alcoholic beverages index climbed 6.2 percent, its largest 12-month rise since March 2001, while restaurant food prices increased 2.7 percent and grocery prices rose 1.4 percent. The overall food and beverages index advanced 2.2 percent since September 2002.

The education and communication index had the next largest impact on retail prices in the Dallas-Fort Worth area during August/September, as it rose 1.7 percent. Higher costs for educational books and supplies, college tuition and fees, elementary and high school tuition and fees, and technical and business school tuition and fees all contributed to the rise in the index. Lower long distance phone service charges partially offset the rise in education costs. During the past 12 months the index for education and communication rose 2.5 percent.

Dallas-Fort Worth Consumer Price Index – September 2003 (Continued)

The indexes for other goods and services and medical care also exhibited increases during the two months ended in September. Other goods and services prices advanced 0.9 percent, while costs for medical care moved up 0.8 percent. Higher prices for cigarettes aided the rise in the other goods and services category. Over the year, the index for other goods and services increased 1.3 percent and medical care costs climbed 4.8 percent.

Apparel was the remaining category to register an increase during August/September. Prices for apparel rose 0.4 percent following a decline of 13.8 percent the previous bimonthly period. Prices rose for several items including men's suits, sport coats, and outerwear, as well as women's outerwear. The current period rise did little to offset June/July decline as the apparel index fell 9.8 percent over the past 12 months.

Lower costs for housing partially offset the advances in the previously mentioned categories. Housing costs slipped 0.2 percent during August/September, after rising 0.4 percent in June/July. A 0.7-percent decline in shelter costs coupled with a 13.2-percent decrease in natural gas prices pushed the housing index downward. In the shelter category, both rent of a primary residence (renters' costs) and owners' equivalent rent (homeowners' costs) exhibited declines since July. In contrast, electricity costs rose 4.5 percent and prices for household furnishings and operations advanced 1.4 percent during the current period. During the last twelve months, the housing index moved up 2.4 percent, due to higher gas, electricity, and shelter costs. Natural gas prices increased 46.8 percent since September 2002, electricity costs advanced 13.4 percent, and shelter costs rose 1.3 percent. The index for household furnishings and operations partially countered the annual increases in the other three components as it declined 4.2 percent.

In the transportation index, lower prices for new and used cars and trucks more than offset higher prices for gasoline, as the index retreated 0.4 percent during August/September. The current period decline followed an increase of 1.8 percent during the previous bimonthly period. Gasoline prices rose 4.3 percent since July. The average price for a gallon of gasoline in the Dallas-Fort Worth area was \$1.561 in September. Over the past 12 months, transportation costs rose 3.4 percent, primarily due to a 13.2-percent advance in gasoline prices.

The recreation index also registered a decrease in August/September, falling 0.6 percent. The decline followed consecutive 1.0-percent increases the two prior bimonthly periods. Lower prices for photographic equipment and supplies contributed to the decrease in the current period. Since September 2002, recreation costs advanced 4.4 percent.